

Linking Returning Veterans in Rural Community Colleges to Mental Health Care

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Research Team

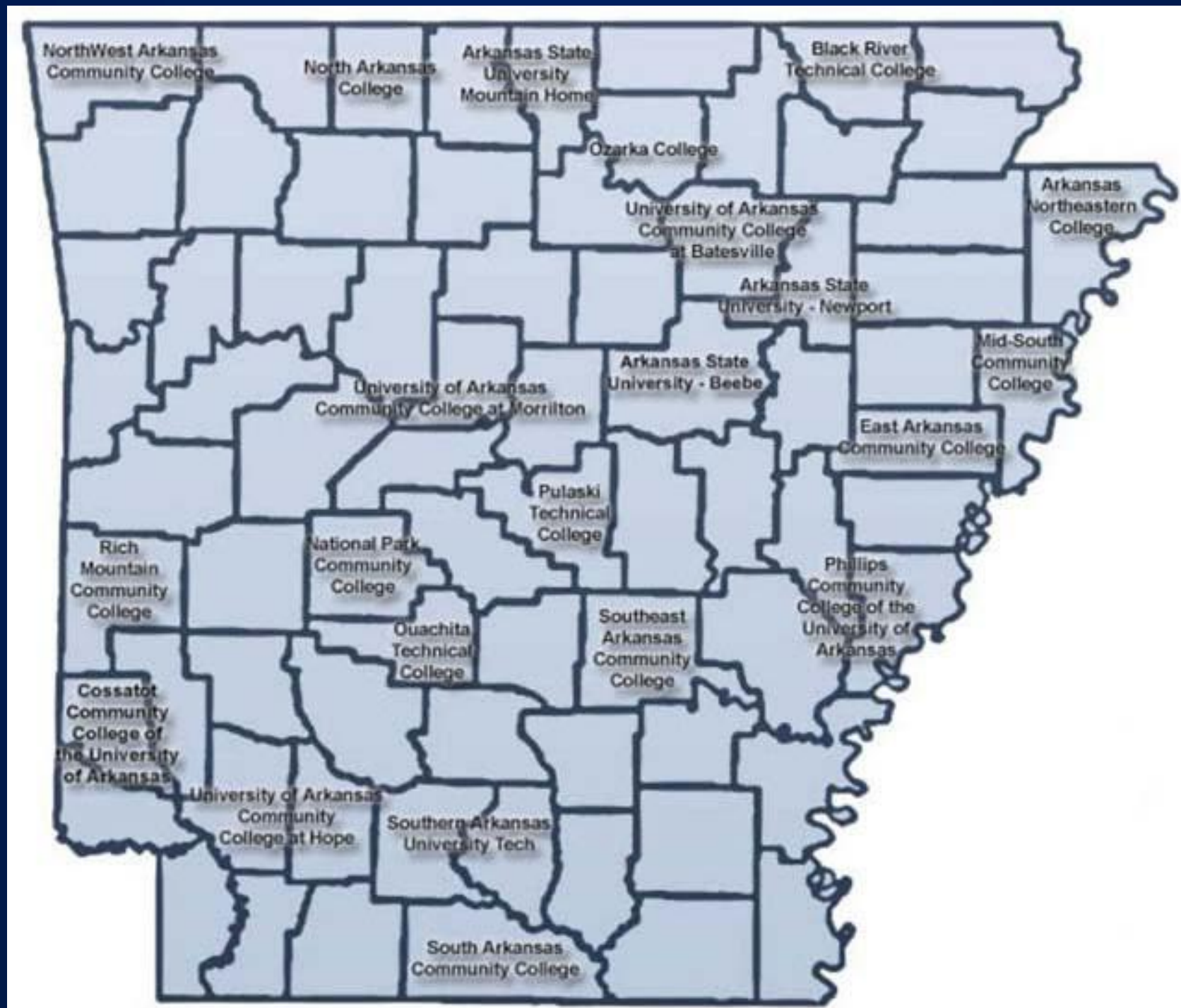
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- Other Significant Contributors
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 - Survey Sciences Group—Center for Student Studies in Ann Arbor

Background

- 18.5% of the 1.7 million soldiers returning from OEF/OIF report symptoms consistent with PTSD or depression (Burnam et al, 2009).
- Remains critical to link OEF/OIF veterans with mental health problems to care in order to promote successful re-integration into a productive, civilian life.
- Community colleges represent an important rural setting through which we can promote veterans' engagement with formal care.



22 Arkansas Community Colleges



Gap in Knowledge

- Prior to designing an intervention to link student veterans in community colleges with services, we first must develop an improved understanding of:
 - Prevalence of mental disorders
 - Help-seeking patterns
 - Barriers impeding student veterans from seeking treatment
- To know if a unique intervention is needed for student veterans, we must understand how these barriers differ from those present in the general population of community college students.

8 ASU and UA Community Colleges in the Study



Specific Aims

- 1) Collect quantitative survey data on the mental health status of student veterans attending underserved community colleges, their help-seeking behavior, and their attitudes toward mental health care.
- 2) Using qualitative methods, achieve a deeper understanding of student veterans' preferences regarding help-seeking and their attitudes toward interventions offering mental health screening and linkage to care.
- 3) Develop a new detection and linkage prototype.
 - Directly informed by the mixed quantitative and qualitative data in specific aims #1 and #2.
 - Developed in direct partnership with student veterans and their significant others.

Two Separate Funding Sources

- Department of Defense
 - Defense Medical Research and Development Program (DMRDP)
 - Applied Research and Advanced Technology Awards Program
 - 1.1 million over 3 years (12/10 to 12/13)
- NIMH
 - R-21 Funding Mechanism
 - 500 K over 2 years (1/11 to 12/12)

Two Separate Funding Sources

- DoD
 - Quantitative data collection from the student veteran sample via a web-based survey (Yr 1).
 - Qualitative data collection for intervention development via key participant interviews and focus groups (Yrs 2 and 3).
- NIMH R-21
 - Quantitative data collection from the civilian student comparison group via a web-based survey (Yrs 1 and 2).

Quantitative Hypotheses

1. Student veterans will demonstrate a higher prevalence of depression, PTSD, TBI, substance misuse, and suicidal ideation than traditional students.
2. Student veterans will demonstrate a lower prevalence of help-seeking than traditional students.
3. Lower help-seeking among student veterans will be mediated by malleable factors, including low social support, low perceived need, and high stigma.

Future Directions

- Submit an R34 application to support the development of a screening and linkage intervention for civilian students attending community colleges (if they are found to be different from student veterans).
- Submit a K-23 with the eventual goal of developing a community college-based, rural practice based research network.
- Eventually test the R34 intervention in a randomized trial with R01 funding.